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The Divine Romance of Marriage

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THE choice of the particular viewpoint of human marriage which I will try to develop in this address was the occasion of not a little mental anguish. I know that the reason for the discussion of this question at this precise time is exceedingly practical. It is preparation for effective opposition to the coming drive of the American Birth Control League to change existing postal regulations with regard to the matter of contraception. The obvious, and I might say the easiest, method for me to have followed, would have been to sum up the arguments of the contraceptionists, ethical, medical, social, economic, and eugenic, and to meet them with convincing refutation. This would have involved neither prolonged nor over-difficult analysis, as I am quite familiar with the mentality of the birth-controllers on these various approaches to the subject.

Now I have no doubt that this analysis will be achieved completely and satisfactorily in your coming meetings and round-table discussions. And so it seemed to me that in preparation for your analysis it would be helpful and illuminating to attempt, however imperfectly, to make a synthesis of Catholic sex morality, both from the standpoint of reason and religion.

Such a consideration of marriage immediately leads us to one of the great mysteries of human existence, the mystery of sex. I call sex a mystery, because we do not fully understand it.

Among the activities and appetites of the human body, sex occupies an unique position. When we consider eating, drinking, sleep—indeed, bodily pleasure as a whole—we find this entire province of human experience characterised by a lack of depth. . . . Sex on the other hand as contrasted with the other departments of bodily experience, is *essentially* deep. Every manifestation of sex produces an effect which transcends the physical sphere and, in a fashion quite unlike the other bodily desires, involves the soul deeply in its passion.

... And as a result it is characteristic of sex that in virtue of its very significance and nature it tends to become incorporated with experiences of a higher order, purely psychological and spiritual. ["In Defence of Purity"; Dietrich Von Hildebrand.]

Much has been done of late to heal the rupture between reason and Faith made by nineteenth century science. Not so much progress has been achieved towards a reconciliation between the moral teaching of Catholics, philosophical and theological, and the secular ethics of today.

The problem does not, indeed, present itself to the average Catholic in these general terms, but in the more pressing forms of the concrete case—in the opposition between the teaching of the Church and the world around him on marriage, on the family, on chastity, on divorce, on birth control and the rest. The devout Catholic will loyally accept the teaching of the Church on these heads, but not many, perhaps, are able to give that teaching an intelligent assent; few are conscious of a consistent, coherent policy or doctrine underlying the Church's precepts, which consequently are apt to appear as so many disconnected, arbitrary, and unintelligible hardships; fewer still realize the essential conformity, not to say identity, between Christian moral law and right reason or common sense. [*Blackfriars*, August, 1933: "A Synthesis of Sexual Ethics."]

I hope in this necessarily sketchy treatment to be able to indicate certain points which must be brought out to show the conformity between Catholic sexual ethics and right reason. And following the example of St. Thomas, let us start off with an examination of the secular sex ethics of our modern world. According to the modern viewpoint, we can, do, and must distinguish two aspects in the sexual instinct, both of equal importance. One is subjective, individual, and recreational; the other is objective, social, and procreational. The one concerns something which is distinctively personal, the other concerns something which is distinctively altruistic. As one or the other of these aspects is emphasized, the outcome in sexual relationships will be different. But the difference is not the difference between what is morally good and morally bad in the old accepted meaning of the term, since all sense of sin in connection with sex has been effectively removed. If the sex instinct is indulged for subjective, individual, recreational purposes, the legitimate outcome is either free-love or companionate marriage. On the other hand, the use of the sexual appetite for its objective, social, and procreational purposes has

its logical outcome in marriage for parenthood with the prelude of trial marriage.

The "new freedom" is the beautiful and euphemistic phrase sometimes used to express the attitude towards sex as something legitimately individual, personal, recreational. It is the attitude of those who make the separation of the two aspects of sex the basis and foundation of all sex morality. Amongst these there are two schools of thought.

There are the transcendentalists who believe with Mr. Havelock Ellis, that "sexual pleasure wisely used and not abused, may prove the stimulus and liberator of our finest and most exalted activities." And there are the unpretentious hedonists who believe that sexual pleasure is pleasure and not the stimulus or liberator of anything important. Both are, as we say, emancipated; neither recognizes the legitimacy of objective control unless a child is born, and both reject as evil the traditional subjective control exercised by the sense of sin. Where they differ is in their valuation of love. [Lippmann.]

The sexual conduct of men and women is an entirely personal, individual, legitimate affair that is the business of no one but themselves. Bertrand Russell rejoices that by this doctrine it is possible to do away with commercialized prostitution. Just as Russell would do away with prostitution by making all sex prostitutes, so Judge Lindsey would make moral the extra-matrimonial sexual relations of youth by the simple expedient of companionate marriage. Companionate marriage is a man-made attempt to stabilize, legalize, and moralize, so to speak, sexual relationships hitherto considered immoral and branded by Scripture and Christian tradition with no very complimentary names. It is to be a legal marriage, with legalized birth control, and with the right to divorce without alimony by mutual consent for childless couples.

So much for the new ethic when it fixes its attention on the subjective, the individual, the so-called recreational function of sex. Another ethic is desirable in the minds of moderns when we come to the question of parenthood. All parenthood should, of course, in this view, be voluntary. Voluntary parenthood is the great boon conferred on humanity by the discovery of contraceptives. Before the advent of children there should be legal trial marriages. It is only at the point when children come, according to Russell, that marriage in reality should begin. After that the proper edu-

cation of the children demands that marriage should be stable and divorce should only be granted for the most serious reasons. Of these adultery is not one. Russell scorns the idea that adultery is in any sense sinful or immoral. The one thing to be avoided by voluntary parents above all others is jealousy. It is necessary that husband and wife should be one for the proper upbringing of the children, but there is to be absolute freedom for extra-matrimonial adventures. Russell, of course, on the question of divorce is a rigorist. Still others find Lord Russell's idea of such monogamous marriage distasteful. One writes: "In my millennium there would be no unwilling mothers, because motherhood would cease to be the penalty of marriage." For children-loving husbands she suggests professional mothers and the reception of the children thus raised into the home. Mr. Russell thus believes in marriage for parenthood with the privilege of extra-matrimonial romance. The emancipated lady believes in marriage for romance with the privilege of extra-matrimonial children.

Thus we have seen what the new morality of sex is when it distinguishes between the functions of that faculty either as something subjective and personal or as something objective and social. Two factors have been largely instrumental in precipitating and crystallizing these latest views on sex and marriage: the discovery of contraceptives and the economic emancipation of woman. In the words of Bertrand Russell:

Contraceptives have altered the whole aspect of sex and marriage, and have made distinctions necessary which formerly could have been ignored. People can come together for sex alone, as occurs in prostitution, or for companionship involving a sexual element, as in Judge Lindsay's companionate marriage, or finally for the purpose of rearing a family. These are all different and no morality can be adequate to modern circumstances which confounds them in one indiscriminate total.

Whatever may have been the influence of the discovery of contraceptives and the economic emancipation of woman on the new morality, we have to search much deeper than these to explain its rapid spread and ready acceptance by the multitude. Behind these revolutionary views, whether those who subscribe to them fully recognize it or not, there is a settled philosophy of life, and that philosophy is athe-

istic. In the modern philosophy there is no Creator who brought man forth for a definite purpose, gave him a rational nature for the fulfillment of that destiny, and imposed the fulfillment of that destiny upon his rational will. Moderns will have nothing to do with the theocratic idea of the universe in which God is Lord and man is his servitor. Instead they claim democracy in religion and morals as well as government. "If there is a God, we are part of Him; if there is a moral code, it is a democratic code arising from our free choice and a code that we may democratically revise whenever changed conditions advise a change. Instead of a first and intelligent Cause to explain man as the master of the visible universe, they have substituted an evolutionary process to tell how man is a product of the universe. Hence, they say that morals, being only conventions in the social evolution of man, are subject to changes similar to those which evolution has brought about in the physical order of the universe. In an agricultural age, wife and children were an economic necessity of men face to face with labor shortage. Hence adultery was an invasion of the property rights of man. A new morality is demanded by man in a machine age. Woman is now free. The industrial revolution has emancipated her from economic dependence on man. Contraceptives have emancipated her from the penalty of her sex, children. Science has emancipated her from a sense of sin. There is nothing sinful in sex, but there is need to develop a new ethic of sex which will teach men and women how to use their new-found freedom wisely and there is need to embody these conclusions in the social conventions and the civil law. Hence they propose to sanction socially and legally free love, companionate and trial marriage, divorce by mutual consent. Since contraceptive birth control is at the heart of the matter, they are making all this ado about it with a success sufficient to make the heavens weep. So all this liberalism, all this much-vaunted new morality and freedom, stand forth when revealed in their ugly nakedness as sheer materialism and stark atheism.

Now just as the secular ethics of sex is radiated in sometimes an open, sometimes a veiled, denial of God, or an agnosticism equivalent to such a denial, so the Catholic sexual ethics is founded on the existence of God and the logic of His creative activity. The latest advances in science are

all tending towards the acknowledgment of a God and a God of order. In the recently published "Limitations of Science," so very favorably reviewed, J. W. N. Sullivan says:

What is called the "modern revolution" in science consists in the fact that the old Newtonian outlook, which dominated the scientific world for nearly two-hundred years, has been found insufficient. It is in process of being replaced by a different outlook and, although the reconstruction is by no means complete, it is already apparent that the philosophical implications of the new outlook are very different from those of the old. . . . The fact that science is confined to a knowledge of structure is obviously of great humanistic importance. For it means the problem of the nature of reality is not prejudged. We are no longer required to believe that our response to beauty, or the mystics' sense of communion with God, have no objective counterpart.

Men are beginning to see, let us hope, that they cannot understand the universe without God. May they also see what is more important that man himself is even less understandable without God.

If you will imagine a race which, though it had made considerable advance in scientific knowledge, nevertheless, had never arrived at the discovery of keys and locks, you can also imagine what a furore the scientific men would be thrown into if an alien aviator dropped a key in its midst. Some would say it was an instrument of war; others that it was a tool of magic. There would be almost as many opinions about the nature of the key as there were scientific men. They never would discover its meaning and purpose until they found a lock for which the key was made and into which it could be inserted perfectly. Now man is the key and the lock is God, and we can only understand man adequately in his relation to God. Christ is the perfect translation of God in human terms and He is also the perfect interpretation of man in terms of God. He has been in his human nature perfectly inserted in God by the union of his human with his Divine nature through his Divine personality. I merely mention this here for further use.

Now, as modern science confesses, we only arrive through experimental science at the structure of reality. We arrive at the nature of reality, in some of its aspects at least, by philosophical science. The natures of things are necessarily imitations of some perfection in the First Cause, God, in virtue of which natures, creatures are able to do by created

activity some little thing which God can do by his uncreated activity. Each nature or entity has its own particular or specific activity which is characteristic of itself and by which it is distinguished from every other entity which is not capable of this precise activity. As the whole universe is a universe of order with a complicated relationship of the diverse natures in it to each other and the universe as a whole, the very stability and perfection of the universe depends on right order—namely, that each entity should perform the operations characteristic of itself and no other.

If an hydrogen atom, for instance, should run amuck and perform the activity of an oxygen atom, it is not improbable that the whole physical universe would be thrown into disorder. But there is no danger of this, for the Author of nature has imposed on every irrational entity a rule of conduct, stamped it with his Will, so that not only it cannot perform any activity not its own, but must perform its own activity when the conditions are present for its proper operation. This is what is known as physical law. Man, though ruled also by physical law, is unique in this. Since he has reason, he also has free will. He is indeed moved to the performance of his proper activity by his nature, but since that is a free nature, he is moved *freely* to that end. He is indeed *bound* to express in his activity the universal law of order as is every other entity. But the *bond* is not physically compelling. He is physically free to be disordered in his conduct, but not morally free. This moral restraint is put upon him by his *reason*, which discovers the necessary order of things and dictates the necessity of expressing that order to his free will. This *dictate of reason*, this rule of reason, this command of man's intellect demanding him to observe the universal order of things and forbidding its disturbance is the natural law. It is that law of which Blackstone speaks:

As man depends absolutely on his Maker in all things, it is necessary that he should in all things conform to his Maker's will . . . This will is called the law of nature. . . . When God created man and endowed him with free will to conduct himself in parts of life, He laid down immutable laws of human nature . . . These are the immutable laws of good and evil . . . which He has allowed reason to discover for the conduct of human actions. This law of nature is binding all over the globe, in all countries, at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this.

Upon this natural law all morality is founded. True morality is not the product of whim or fancy or destructive self-exaltation on the part of the creature. It is not even the product of mere arbitrary will on the part of the Creator. It is founded on the order arising from the very natures of things. As these natures are imitations of Divine perfections, the order based on these natures is ultimately founded on the Divine Nature, which is the ultimate source of all reality and of all good. When the actions of natures are in accordance with the order necessarily arising from those natures, those actions are good; when they are out of conformity with that order, they are evil. Hence the dictates of reason commanding us to observe order in our free activity and forbidding us disordered conduct constitute the natural moral law. These dictates are the command to do that which every wise rational being would do if he saw adequately the essential laws of his own being, and understood how his happiness, physical as well as psychological, was bound up in the observance of those laws. The dictates of the natural law are thus rules of health and happiness as well as rules of holiness.

We are now in a position to apply all this to the matter of sex. The logic of human nature in the matter of sex is this. The sexual faculty is primarily a social faculty, which is given for the good and continuance and preservation of the human race. It is a social faculty, first, because it is to be exercised in the most elemental society, the union of man and woman; it is again a social faculty because it develops that primitive society into parental society; it is still more a social faculty because it tends towards the good of man living in the social organism; it is finally a social faculty because it is intimately bound up with the highest good of man living in a social organism, the common good of the State. I do not say that the faculty of sex is not given also for the good of the individual. It is; but it is necessary to see wherein that good lies according to the intent and purpose of nature. The use of any human faculty in accordance with the *logic* of that faculty is for the real good of the individual, and does lead to the developing perfection of the individual. But if the faculty happens to be at the same time primarily a social faculty, the good of the individual is bound up in the right use of that faculty

in accordance with its social ends. The individual good is bound up in the social good. Nowhere is this more manifestly true than in the social faculty now under consideration. It is not necessary to labor the point that nature intends the propagation of the human race, as she intends the propagation of so many lower forms of life, as a result of a principle physically one. But the physical incompleteness of man and woman in matters of sex is not more manifest than their psychological incompleteness in the whole matter of human existence. Even modern psychology does not deny the Biblical axiom that it is not good for man to be alone. The sexes complement each other, emotionally, mentally, psychically as well as physically. It is the psychical incompleteness of man and woman, the need each feels of complement, of a helpmate, the consciousness of dependence on mutual comfort and courage coming from daily association, the feeling of the inability to bring out the best in one, to face the problems of life alone, which are at the basis of human love. When man and woman find in each other the capacity of satisfying these deeply radicated needs, the flame of love begins to flow. It is nature's way, the gentle trickery of nature, to lead man and woman in virtue of the psychical need they have of each other to form that close relationship of marriage by which those who are already one in mind and heart become one physical principle for the propagation of the human race. Only those one in mind and heart can propagate and educate human beings, as they must be propagated, if the whole intention of nature is not to be defeated. Thus it is love, not lust, that leads to the formation of that intimate union wherein according to nature's intention children are born. To reduce love to the level of lust is to ignore the most basic facts in human nature. Love is something much more far-reaching than sex, and only an imperfect analysis will identify it with lust.

It is this human love, characteristic of man alone in the universe, which is the undying theme of novelist and bard. From it flower the finest things in human nature. Love is the fruitful mother of fortitude, undying fidelity, absolute self-forgetfulness. It is on the wings of this love that human nature soars above lower self and curbs it in the interest of higher love. Thus it is that man and woman, mentally, emotionally, psychically united, are led to set up

that relationship wherein their love is led to completion in the procreation of children. Love is the complete abandonment of self to another. It is not only unitive (unites the lovers in heart and soul), it is also benevolent (wishes the greatest good to another). This unitive and benevolent love is expressed and completed when married love becomes a complete donation of self through sexual union. It is the complete surrender of each other's natures to be united in one, according to the intention of nature. And that intention of nature is children, and children are the natural output, if nature is not ruthlessly interfered with. It is by the very force and impetus of human nature that real love, unitive and benevolent, perpetuates itself, becomes incarnate in children. Here the gentle trickery of nature is still more evident, for the human offspring of all nature's kingdom stands most in need of loving care and nursed education. The mutual love of man and woman expressed by children is now by the very demand of nature needed for the education of the child and the child draws husband and wife together in still more unitive and benevolent love, which tends to be more and more altruistic and unselfish. The education of children is a task that needs must be carried on through years. It requires patience, courage, fortitude, gentleness, labor, self-denial, all in the interest of another, or rather in the interest of the projection and incarnation of the mutual love of husband and wife. So nature, by the need two individuals have of one another, leads them step by step from that first love until by its consequences it brings them to that perfection of human nature that shows itself in sanctifying and unselfish love by the care of the God-given product of that love. I say *God-given*, because the human child is at once the product of the creative love of God and the procreative love of husband and wife, so that by the marvelous coöperation of God, the child is at once the product of love human and Divine. As we look out on the marvels of the physical, mechanical, chemical forces of the universe in which we live, what a revelation there is in the thought that all these forces are raised to life, a higher order of being in flower and beast! There is a wonderful cycle in the universe, in which the most insignificant beings are caught and tossed and whirled, always being lifted up and transformed by other entities

higher than they in the order of being. But all these processes (by which natures are brought to their own perfection in the order of being, and are elevated still higher in the scale of perfection by being absorbed and transformed into higher beings) are not as marvelous as the processes by which nature leads man to the highest reaches of unselfish love and perfection, by which he imitates in the procreation and education of children, the goodness, love, and paternity of God. Man by following out the law of his nature is just as surely brought to the natural perfection of that nature, and consequently its most abiding satisfactions and happiness, as all other creatures beneath him in the universe. And in this we see how sex has an individual aspect as well as a social one, though it can only reap its fruit for the individual in the pursuit of the social purposes of sex. The human family is the nursery of virtues by which man transcends his animal nature as heaven transcends earth. The universe becomes incarnate in man, it becomes spiritualized in the family. You will find habitually in the family an array of self-denying virtues in the absence of which man would not rise above the dignity of an earthworm. All this is the individual good to be attained by the exercise of sex through pursuit of its primary and social end. This is the order to be observed and the observance of this order is a clear dictate of reason, hence the natural law.

Is it any wonder, then, when man and woman under the impulse of and by the design of nature have given each other heart, mind, and body in mutual love, when they have expressed that love by children, who are at once the product of love human and Divine, when these children by the very purpose of nature need the guiding hand of that love through many years—is it any wonder, I say, that *nature* speaking through reason, teaches us the great truth that what God has joined together, man must not put asunder. Nature herself consecrates marriage as something, holy, one, indissoluble.

Let me confirm this purpose of nature by one example. Some time ago I gave a radio talk on birth control and pointed out the rewards that nature gives for those who follow nature's laws in marriage. The next day I received the following letter:

Your radio talk was especially welcome to me. I have been listening to many opinions of late from women I meet. Most of them are disgruntled in their attitude towards the Church for her steadfast refusal to condone the practice of birth control . . . The first year after marriage I remained at home. The second year I went back to business, not on my own accord, but due to the foolish fear my husband had that we must have a big salary before thinking of children, a misguided fear he has since realized. Those two years were a nightmare to me, as I felt humiliated and ashamed of my empty arms. And they were not happy either. It seemed we would never reach a common ground of understanding, and we both admit that if we had not had a good Catholic training . . . we would have been separated for incompatibility or maybe, theologically speaking, it may be called God's withheld grace. At any rate, our baby arrived in the third year . . . Then what a changed household. No more petty squabbles, selfish motives, unkind remarks. The baby burst the bubble of incompatibility. A more united family, a more devoted husband and wife it would be hard to find. After my baby was born I realized all you said regarding the rewards of nature in happiness and contentment.

All this has been well put by Will Durant:

It is remarkable how marriage withers when children stay away, and how it blossoms when they come. The woman finds in the midst of turmoil, trouble, worry, and pain, a strange contentment that is like a quiet ecstasy, never in her idleness and luxury was she as happy as in these tasks and obligations that develop and complete her even when seeming to sacrifice her to the race. And the man, looking at her, falls in love with her anew. This is another woman than before, with new resources and new abilities, with a patience and tenderness never felt in the violence of love; and though her face may be pale now, and her form for the time disfigured for corrupt and abnormal eyes, to him it seems as if she had come back out of the jaws of death, with a gift absurdly precious; a gift for which he can never sufficiently repay her. Work which was bitter toil before becomes now as natural and cheerful as honey-seeking to the bee; and the house that was but walls and a bed becomes a *home* filled with the laughter of rejuvenated life. For the first time in his career the man feels himself complete.

But now I wish to speak for a few moments on the results of Christ's coming in as far as they are pertinent to this inquiry. I have called attention to that law in the universe by which higher beings such as plants and animals reach down to lift up to their own high level lower forms of being. Man sums up in himself the perfections of the visible universe. The coming of Christ has taught us that God has reached down and lifted up to Himself the universe summed up in man and deified it in Christ. God has united Himself to human nature in the personality of the

Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, for Jesus Christ is very God and very man. In fact as He called Himself, He is the Son of Man, the man par-excellence. He is the key perfectly inserted in the lock, which is God. As all things went forth from God, so they have been all restored to God through Christ.

In virtue of the Incarnation of the Son of God, God has given to every man the power to be deified, in a very real sense, through a participation in the Divine Nature by grace; "As many as received Him, He gave them the power to be made the sons of God." And just as God has communicated to man a Divine life so He has made it possible for irrational natures to be the ministers of this Divine life as they are ministers to man's natural life. He has given water with the proper form of words power to wash away original sin and to thus incorporate man into the Mystical Body of Christ, by which man shares in the Divine life which is Christ's. He has used material things, bread and oil, to signify and communicate in some way or other this Divine life. He provided by his Sacraments for every phase of human existence. Since the physical and psychical union by which men and women are brought together for the propagation of the sons of men, now made the sons of God, is a central fact and mystery in human existence, Christ took the mutual consent by which the union of Matrimony is made, elevated it to the dignity of a Sacrament, and made it a sign and cause of grace. It was a grace that was to enable husband and wife to fulfil the arduous duties of mutual life, not only to increase and multiply sons of men, but also to increase and multiply the sons of God, to increase and develop to fulness the Mystical Body of Christ. And so St. Paul calls Matrimony a great Sacrament:

This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and the Church. . . . Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church . . . Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish—so also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies . . . as also Christ doth the Church, because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and bones.

Matrimony as a sacrament is a symbol of the union between Christ and the Church, his Mystical Body. And so the Sacrament of Matrimony unites two members of Christ, man and woman, in so close and indissoluble a union that it is a sign and a type of the close and indissoluble union of Christ and his Church. They are henceforth to be inseparable, to be as one, two in one flesh. They are henceforth to be faithful with the undying fidelity of Christ to His Church. Now Christ's love for and union with His Church is fruitful; "For He gave some apostles and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ, until all meet in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ." So, too, the union of two members of Christ, man and woman, in the exercise of marriage, in as far as they are concerned, must likewise be fruitful in the building up of the Body of Christ through children who will be united to their parents, not only by ties of flesh and blood, but also by the unity of the Faith and the knowledge of the Son of God. Thus it is that Christian parents coöperate with Christ in the extension of the Incarnation, in building up Christ's Mystical Body to its full stature.

This is the sublime dignity of Christian Matrimony. In that state man and woman sanctify each other. All the virtues which are the result of marriage considered as a natural state are elevated to a Divine state. The mutual love of man and woman are lifted up and ennobled in a supernatural order. This love is made permanent, lasting, indissoluble as the love of Christ for His Church. The God-given faculty of sex is exercised in accordance with the designs of God to the satisfaction and perfection of the individuals and to the fulfillment of the purposes for which the Son of God became Man. Sex so exercised with all the satisfactions which God grants to the sex instinct is a holy thing, elevated and perfected by the Sacramental grace which Christ won for it by His passion and death.

In the light of all we have outlined about the meaning of sex, of marriage, and the Sacrament of Marriage, the answer to the secular ethics of sex is apparent. All that we

have said in the attempt to synthesize the Catholic ethics of sex is founded on the essential nature of things, on essential order. In the fulfillment of order the perfection of irrational entities consists, and the perfection, happiness, health, and holiness of rational beings. Order is the law of all being, that of God as well as that of the creature. Disorder is the tendency towards non-being, death, and destruction.

The fundamental principle of pagan modern ethics that the subjective, individual, recreational purposes of sex can and should be separated as equally important, from its objective, social, and procreational purposes has been shown to be founded on an imperfect and untrue analysis. Now it is precisely by contraception that this unholy divorce and separation is made. And therein lies the moral malice of contraception. It is essential disorder. It is perversion. Through contraception a faculty designed by nature for an essentially objective social, and procreational purpose is used, and in use by positive means, is perverted for ends purely selfish, subjective, individual, recreational. To practice contraception is to use a faculty and in use to abuse it. No one has brought out this essential perversion in stronger, if clearer language, than G. B. Shaw, for once on the side of the angels. "Contraception is reciprocal masturbation."

I have never seen this indicated, but it seems to me that contraception is a sort of camouflaged homo-sexuality. The effect of the contraceptive, whether employed by the man or woman, is practically to de-sex that individual. It is equivalent to intercourse between two of the same sex.

F. W. Foerster in his classic book, "Marriage and the Sex Problem," expresses in another way the malice of contraception:

We might go further and even define sex ethics as the complete subordination of our sexual conduct to our life as a whole, with all its fundamental interests and responsibilities. But nothing could be more radically false than to imagine that the methods of Neo-Malthusianism mark an advance in the subordination of nature to the spirit. It must be obvious to every thinking person that precisely the opposite is the case. The perfection and popularization of these practices will not assist men to master their instincts and passions, but will on the contrary make it easier than has ever before been the case for man's sexual and animal self to dominate the will and spirit. For the artificial prevention of conception does not in the

least control or discipline the sexual feeling itself. It merely frees it from producing its normal results; and it is these very results which have, in the past, so powerfully contributed towards self-discipline and self-control. Remove the proper and natural consequences of sexual intercourse, and a controlling factor of the first importance has been eliminated. [P. 93.]

Is it surprising, then, that nature should visit the practice of contraception, essential disorder, with severe penalties even in this life? The late F. F. Taylor, President of the British Gynecological Society is quoted as saying: "It would be strange, if so unnatural a practice, one so destructive to the best life of the nation, should bring no penalty in its wake, and I am convinced after many years of observation, that both sudden danger and chronic disease may be produced by the methods of prevention very generally employed." These penalties are observable in the individual, the social, and the economic orders. Ethicians know that the natural law has swift and automatic punishments which are meted out to those who violate it. Over-eating and over-drinking bring assured sanctions. Anger, frequently indulged in, brings on at the least functional heart disturbance. And so we might run through the gamut of the vices and point out how nature visits them with her own unique sanctions. The physiological and psychological sanctions attached to contraception have been summed up excellently well by Raoul de Gucheteneere in his book "Judgment on Birth Control." On the contrary, the rewards nature bestows on those who obey the natural and the supernatural laws with regard to sex are incalculable. To understand these, it is above all things necessary to renew in men's minds the ideal of marriage understood as a collaboration with God in the purposes of human life and the Incarnation of the Son of God. Though fruitfulness is not the unique and necessary end of every individual marriage, it multiplies, especially when it can be multiple, blessings in the family. Fruitful marriage alone responds to the full desires of nature; the child and children are the benediction of the home from every standpoint, biological, psychological, social, moral, and religious.

A Parish Coöperative Apartment for Homeless Women

DOROTHY DAY

A scheme which deserves nation-wide imitation is described in this news story from The Catholic Worker (New York), December, 1933.

ALTHOUGH it cannot be dignified by the name of House of Hospitality, what is virtually a center of hospitality is opening today. December 11, in the parish of the Immaculate Conception Church.

It is called the Teresa Joseph Coöperative, and it is an apartment which will house ten homeless women who have been staying at shelters provided by the city, the Salvation Army, and other organizations.

It is named after the older St. Teresa because she was forced to find shelter for her nuns when she was setting up her new foundations. St. Teresa herself said that one of the reasons for the disintegration of the Carmelites was that the convents had become so poor that the nuns, though enclosed, received callers constantly in order that they might get food from outside. One of her first thoughts always was for the material well-being of her nuns as a foundation for spiritual life.

And it was St. Joseph upon whom she always depended to look after her houses. He had had to provide both house and food for the Blessed Virgin and Child. And he is the one we, too, must appeal to for aid in this venture for Catholic unemployed.

With the coöperation of the priests of the parish, donations were collected from young working women and married women of the neighborhood to provide for the shelter of their less fortunate sisters. Thirty-five dollars was brought in by Father Stephen Seccor and by Father John Nicholas which they had collected from interested young women who pledged themselves to continue their aid monthly in order that the rent, gas, electricity and laundry of the house might be taken care of.

The Catholic Worker received fifteen dollars more, ten dollars from a priest to be used "in any charitable work," and the other from a sorrowing husband who from the bedside of his dying wife sent this donation as one he knew she would be glad to make for the opening up of a home for single unemployed Catholic women.

To those who are discouraged at the vastness of the work to be done, and the slightness of the work accomplished, we wish to call attention to the fact that if fifty parishes or schools or organizations would enter on a similar work, five hundred women would be taken care of before the winter is out! And it can all be done with fifty-cent, regularly-made donations of working girls and married women themselves.

It is not really a "house" that we are opening up, but an apartment in this central neighborhood, steam heated and with a good big bath, six large rooms, five of which can be used as bedrooms, one of them a dormitory holding four beds. The rent is fifty dollars a month.

The kitchen is large enough to be used as a small sitting room.

Peter Maurin started the work with his constant propaganda for more hospitality among Catholics. The unemployed single women who came into the office to tell of their need for a Catholic place of shelter provided the immediate cause. And Father Nicholas and Father Seccor, with their ready coöperation and courage completed the work which could not have gotten under way without the coöperation of the priests.

So far three beds are all that have been obtained, although ten are needed. We also have four blankets, two of them donated by a woman whose family are unemployed, save for one son who is working for ten dollars a week. She washed the blankets herself and sent them down to the office with prayers for the success of the new venture.

Another woman, unable to afford to buy things herself, canvassed among her friends until she found one who voluntarily bought ten sheets, towels and pillow slips.

We have mentioned in another place in this issue how another friend sent in the first contribution in the way of

two sheets. Another woman sent drapes, a blanket and sheets, and she is the mother of a large family who could well use them herself.

There is no one no matter how poor who cannot do something for us, so we do not hesitate to ask our New York and Brooklyn readers to call the office if they are able to donate sheets, blankets, towels, pillows, or if they wish to make a donation of money to buy any of these things.

Today we are taking *Catholic Worker* money to buy more beds from a rooming house which is being disbanded. We spent some time looking around for some without success, for people don't keep such cumbersome things if they are not in use.

The winter is on us and we can wait no longer and beds we must have. We will borrow blankets for the time being and use those of the editors. They can roll themselves in coats and newspapers, which are said to be warm, though we are sure they are very noisy.

However, we hug to ourselves the assurance that "all these things" such as blankets "will be added unto us," so we are not dismayed. Come to think of it, there are two rugs on *The Catholic Worker* floor, which, if energetically beaten out, will serve as covers.

Christ's first bed was of straw.

Easy Essays

PETER MAURIN

Reprinted from The Catholic Worker (New York), November, 1933.

FOR CATHOLIC ACTION

We Catholics have a better criticism of bourgeois society than Victor Considerant's criticism, used by Karl Marx. Our criticism of bourgeois society is the criticism of Blessed Thomas More.

We Catholics have a better conception of Communism than the conception of Proudhon.

Our conception of Communism
is the conception of St. Thomas Aquinas
in his doctrine of the "Common Good."
We Catholics have better means
than the means proposed by Karl Marx.
Our means to realize the "Common Good"
are embodied in Catholic Action.
Catholic Action is action by Catholics
for Catholics and non-Catholics.
We don't want to take over the control
of political and economic life.
We want to reconstruct the social order
through Catholic Action
exercised in Catholic Institutions.

THE BISHOPS' PROGRAM

Shortly after the War the Bishops of America
formulated a Program of Social Reconstruction
largely based on Coöperation.
But the Bishops' Program failed to materialize
for lack of coöperators.
Catholic laymen and women were more interested in a
laissez-faire economy.
So Catholic laymen and women
went back to Normalcy with Harding;
they tried to Keep Cool with Coolidge,
and now they try to See Rosy with Roosevelt.
Catholic laymen and women are more interested
in political action
than they are interested
in Catholic Action.
Catholic laymen and women are more ready to follow
the leadership of the politicians
than they are ready to follow
the leadership of the Bishops.